

EAST AND WEST SERIES

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PROPHETS
OF LOVE

Shri Sri Ma Anandamayee Ashram
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T. L. VASWANI

EAST AND WEST SERIES

[Monthly]

An Interpreter of the Life of the Spirit

9/249

PROPHETS OF LOVE

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—The Manager

FOREWORD

THE teaching of all the saints of humanity is summed up in the one word,—Love. The message of all the mystics is enshrined in the one word,—Love. The wisdom of the sages, the wisdom of the ages is in the one word,—Love. The witness of Sri Rama and Jesus, Sri Chaitanya and Guru Gobind Singh,—of whom Beloved Dada (Sri T. L. Vaswani) writes in these pages,—is in the one word,—Love.

"God is Love! And he who abides in Love abides in God and God abides in him!" said a Sufi mystic. Love is the One Reality : all else is but words. Love is Truth, and Truth is Love. I set out in quest of Truth,—said Simone Weil,—and I fell into the arms of Love.

"What is love?" was the question asked of the great Sufi saint, Bayazid. And he answered :—"This is love,—that ye account yourselves very little and God very great."

This was the secret of the lives of Sri Rama and Jesus, Sri Chaitanya and Guru Gobind Singh. They accounted themselves "very little and God very great."

He who loves God is freed from pride. He loves every one, even his "enemies." And, as Sri Chaitanya repeatedly taught, he becomes like the tree which gives fruit to those that pelt stones at it. He rewards the smiter. And, like Jesus, he blesses and prays for those who crucify him:—"Father ! forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Love ever-increasingly ! For love is limitless. And he who would walk the way must pour out the love of his heart on all, must spread the sunshine of love wherever he goes. Even as the sun shines on the good and the evil alike, even as the river gives forth its water to all, even so must the seeker on the Path share, unstintingly, the love of his

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heart with all. To give love is to be god-like : to withhold love is to descend into darkness.

*"Alone, O Love ineffable !
Thy saving name is given;
To turn aside from Thee is hell,
To walk with Thee is heaven !"*

"Grow in love,—and in humility,—from more to more!" was the blessing Beloved Dada gave us, again and again. Grow in love from more to more : therefore give more and more love to others. For the more of love you give, the more you will have. Such is the law !

When a mother came and complained to Beloved Dada that her daughter had gone astray, he said to her :—"Give your daughter the love of your heart,—and she will come back !"

And when the mother protested that the daughter had been "spoilt" only because she had been given too much of love, Beloved Dada quietly said :—"Love her the more !"

If anyone has departed from the path of righteousness, his only hope is in someone loving him,—limitlessly.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Sri Rama. It transformed Kubja and many others who came under his influence.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Jesus. It converted Mary Magdalene, and the sinner became a saint.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Sri Chaitanya. It converted robbers and courtesans and wicked men. It made them new. It even laid a spell on wild, ferocious beasts.

Such love flowed out of the heart of Guru Gobind Singh. It touched his disciples and they exclaimed :—"Lord, we are thine ! We lay down our lives as an offering at thy

lotus-feet !" And Guru Gobind Singh built up the Khalsa Brotherhood. The Khalsas became the saviours and liberators of India, in a dark period of the nation's history. Every member of the Khalsa Brotherhood sang in his heart the song of the Iraqi poet :—

*I am love-intoxicated.
And from love to Thee
I lay down my life for Thee!*

There is no power greater than love. And love is not love if it does not flow out to friends and foes alike. "Love, love, love even thine enemy," says beloved Dada; "and though he hate thee as a thorn, thou wilt blossom as a rose!"

If you would make rapid progress on the Path, Beloved Dada urged, you must bless those that curse you, serve those that slander you, rush to the help of those that hurt you, for you and your brother are one !

In the mind of Beloved Dada there was no separation. We entered a bus one day. There was only one vacant seat. He made room for me and asked me to sit by his side. And I said to him :—"Dada! if I sit, there will be very little room left for you." And Beloved Dada said :—"We will love each other more and there will be plenty of room." In Beloved Dada's mind there was no feeling of separation,—between his own body and the body of another. Both were tabernacles of the One Spirit.

This is what gave him a sense of identification with the sufferings of the poor and broken ones. He did not merely have "compassion" on the poor. He actually felt that their sorrows were his sorrows. And, not unoften, he wept, seeing another in grief. There is no death," he taught us early one morning. "Death is an illusion. We must learn to transcend it." And in the course of the day he was called to the side of an old mother who had

lost an only son in an air-crash. She wept bitter tears. And Beloved Dada's eyes were touched with tears. When, later, we said to him :— "Only this morning you taught us that death was an illusion. What, then, was the reason of your tears ?" he answered :—"When I sat by the side of the old mother, I felt *I* was the old mother!" Was this, too, the reason why Jesus wept when he sat by the side of the sister of Lazarus ?

To Beloved Dada, helping others was not a duty : it was not even a virtue : it was a pulse of existence. For him to live was to love,—and serve the poor and broken ones. And they came to him as to their father and friend, their guardian and God. "We have seen no other God!" they exclaimed. And to him the poor were pictures of God. He gave and gave and was never tired of giving. He gave till the last day of his earthly life. He gave and kept no account of what he gave. He gave and forgot all about it. He gave in love to the lowly : he gave in reverence to the poor and needy. Not once did he fail in answering the call of human suffering.

The four Prophets of Love, concerning whom a little is said in the following pages, taught that God is beyond knowledge. And God may be known by loving Him. They who love God find their rest in God alone. They behold Him in the Temple of the Heart,—and in the hearts of all who are in suffering and pain. For all are in God : and God is in all. And loving God, they go forth to serve the poor and broken ones, the forsaken and forlorn. They are the true comrades of God, servants of suffering creation, healers of broken humanity.

J. P. VASIVANI

A PROPHET OF LOVE

SRI CHAITANYA* was born in 1485. Navadvipa, the actual place of his birth, was situated on the river Bhagirathi, seventy-five miles north of Calcutta, and was washed away by the Ganges. Navadvipa or Nadia was, then, a stronghold of *navya nyaya*, the New Logic. It developed a logical mind and made many sceptical, argumentative. There came a day when Chaitanya, no longer a mere scholar but a seer, asked his countrymen :—"Renounce the logical mind. Commune with sages and saints. And awaken within you the intuitions of mystic love and faith."

Radiant was his face. He came to kindle a light in the darkness of his age. He was born near a *nim* tree : so the mother loved to call him Nimai. He was, also, called Gaur. The word means fair, beautiful. Nimai was fair of form and colour and beautiful to behold. Not until he entered into *sanyasa*, the great renunciation, and stepped up as a Teacher of men, was he called Chaitanya. The name was given him when he was initiated by Keshava Bharati into *sanyasa*. The fuller name was Sri Krishna Chaitanya,—the meaning of the words being, "Krishna-centred," "Krishna-awakened," "one whose whole consciousness was centred in Krishna."

At the age of forty-eight years, he passed away. He was richly blessed. He made society purer, he made literature richer and sweeter, he made the life of the people nobler by teaching them to commune with Krishna and Radha through japa and kirtan,—meditation and holy song.

*March 26 was sacred as the birthday of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

SRI CHAITANYA's life of ecstatic communion with Krishna and of dedicated service to men and suffering animals has been called a "drama in three acts," by a great *bhakta* who called himself Krishna Das (a servant of Krishna). His fuller name is Krishna Das Kaviraj. His book, named *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, is regarded as an authority on Chaitanya and his followers. Its language is Bengali blended with Hindi.

Krishna Das was an orphan. He lost his father and mother when he was a child. He had a brother who was a sceptic, and this caused him pain. But he had a longing to study, to know life, to understand the universe. He studied Persian and he became a master, too, of Sanskrit language and literature. He came under the influence of Nityananda, the great disciple and companion of Chaitanya and the teacher and inspirer of *bhakti* in Bengal. So Krishna Das became a Vaishnava. And in the heart of Krishna Das the longing grew to leave noisy, tumultuous Bengal and to travel to the holy land of Brindaban, to stay there and to dedicate his life to the service of Krishna and Chaitanya and the Vaishnava Community.

Krishna Das had no money, but he had the faith which can overcome obstacles. He begged his way to Brindaban. Coming there, he got in touch with Raghunath Das, who was a direct disciple of the Master. From Raghunath Das, Krishna Das learnt details concerning the life and teaching of Sri Chaitanya.

Krishna Das was a *brahmachari* and a great Sanskrit scholar. When he was in his seventy-ninth year, the Vaishnavas of Brindaban requested him to write a book on Chaitanya. Krishna Das took seven years to complete the book. Every evening in Brindaban, the Vaishnavas

met together in a small house to listen to the teaching and incidents of Chaitanya's life. But the book, being in Sanskrit, was not easily intelligible to all. So they requested Krishna Das to write the same book in Bengali. Old and infirm was Krishna Das. "I shall let you know," he said, "what my Lord, Krishna, commands me to do."

He prayed to Krishna's Image. A garland of flowers slipped down from the neck of Krishna,—a sign that Krishna was blessing Krishna Das. And he began the work of writing a biography in Bengali of Sri Chaitanya. After a labour of nine years, this saintly Vaishnava completed his book. Every page Krishna Das wrote grew out of the depths of meditation and out of his experience of life.

THE first act in the Drama of Chaitanya's life is called *adilila*. It covers the first twenty-four years of his life. In this first *lila*, we see Nimai as a frolicsome child, fond of sports and plays. We see him as a student becoming proficient in Sanskrit grammar, logic and poetry. We see him, at last, as a young man teaching pupils in his own *tal* or school. We see him growing in honour and social influence. Nimai is honoured as the greatest scholar of his day.

Nimai goes on a pilgrimage to Gaya to pay offerings to the soul of his departed father. In the Temple of Gaya, Nimai sees Vishnu's footprints and suddenly chants the Name of Krishna. Nimai becomes a *bhakta*. He forgets his books and learning. He remembers only Krishna. Asked to lecture on grammar and logic, he lectures on Krishna! "Krishna is my all," he says. He falls into "fits," has trances and visions and goes into mystic communion with Krishna. Advaita Acharya hears of Nimai's "trances" and comes to examine for himself the ecstatic fits of Nimai.

Advaita Acharya is a great scholar, but is conquered by Nimai and becomes a *bhakta*. Nityananda, too, comes to see for himself the trances of Nimai and becomes a disciple of Nimai.

Navadvipa is become a centre of Nimai's new *bhakti* movement. Nadia's houses ring with *kirtan* and *Hari Nama*. "Temple-sacrifices and renunciation are not for *kaliyuga* (the present age)," is the cry which spreads from house to house; "*karma* (ritual) and *gnana* (knowledge) are paths difficult to tread. *Bhakti* (love) is the need of the age."

St. Paul spread the message of Jesus, far and wide. Nityananda spread Chaitanya's message, making Vaishnavism the dominant religion of Bengal. Chaitanya left Nadia when he entered into *sanyasa*. Nityananda came to Nadia and lived with Chaitanya's mother as her son.

In this period, too, Jagai and Madhai,—two influential men, hostile to Nimai,—are converted. Nimai converts, also, the Muslim governor into a *bhakta*.

Soon after, Nimai leaves his home at night and goes to Katwa and implores Keshava Bharati to initiate him into the *sanyas* order. Keshava Bharati gives to Nimai the new name "Sri Krishna Chaitanya." Chaitanya severs all home ties for the sake of Krishna, the Beloved. Here begins the second act in the Drama of Chaitanya's life, named the *madhyalila*.

Chaitanya goes on a pilgrimage to many places,—to the south and to the north, to Pandharpur and Rameshwaram, to Banaras and to Mathura and Brindaban. Two of the persons won over to the Vaishnava Faith by Chaitanya are :—(1) Ramanand Roy, and (2) Prakashananda,—a follower of Shankara Acharya. The very sight of Chaitanya

inspired many to *bhakti*,—devotion to Krishna and Radha. To see Chaitanya was to love Sri Krishna.

The third period is named *antatila*. In Chaitanya the longing grew to spend more of his time (1) in quiet contemplation of his Beloved, Sri Krishna; and (2) in the service of the poor and broken ones in whom Chaitanya saw the *lila* of his Beloved. Chaitanya, having travelled much, settled down at Nilachala, Puri, in Orissa. There he lived a life of contemplation for eighteen years.

SRI CHAITANYA's followers were named Vaishnavas. "Who is a Vaishnava?" they asked me more than once in my sojourn in Bengal. I said the true Vaishnava was a "magnetic man" : and the secret of magnetism was the love that flowed out pure to everyone,—pure as the pure waters of the River Ganges. Sri Chaitanya said to his disciples :—"Know him to be a true Vaishnava at whose very sight the thought of Krishna illuminates the eyes."

A disciple of Chaitanya referred to twelve rules of *bhakti* in the following suggestive words :—

1. Adore Krishna and accept His Will.
2. Have no desire to have disciples.
3. Avoid the company of the ungodly.
4. Resist the distraction of reading books which disturb concentration.
5. Accept cheerfully loss or gain as it comes in the mart of life.
6. Eschew sectarianism : never find fault with other religions or rites or Gods.

7. Visit no place where anyone is ill-talked of.
8. Indulge not in gossip or idle talk.
9. Refrain in thought and word and action from anything which may wound the feelings of others.
10. Remember always how good is God and always say :—"Thy Mercy, O Lord! ever endures!"
11. Recite His Name,—by day and night.
12. Remember His Love as you serve the poor and needy.

All the rules of *bhakti* are summed up in the one supreme declaration :—Dedicate all you have and are to the One Beloved,—Krishna!

One such *bhakta*, a true Vaishnava, a lover of Chaitanya, free from the least touch of sectarianism, blessing all, rejoicing in *kirtan*, reciting the Name of the Lord, beholding Him in the poor and needy, adoring Krishna and His Will in all events, in all incidents, in all vicissitudes of life, I saw in Calcutta, when I visited Bengal in 1945. Many spoke of him as a "wonder" : he was 106 years of age! He was an *āchārya* of the Vaishnava Faith : he was a Teacher of the *Gita*. He had the mellow wisdom of age but the face and voice of youth. Sri Chaitanya's name thrilled him. He was a careful student of the *Bhagavata Purana*. It was a joy to me to hear him say that the message of Sri Chaitanya would, if assimilated by India, make her, again, a Teacher of the Nations, as once she was in the long ago. In love and reverence we uttered his name,—Rasik Mohan Vidya-bhushan. In such true Vaishnavas, Rishis and Sages, I humbly submit, is the hope of this Ancient Land.

A KRISHNA-INTOXICATED life lived Sri Chaitanya at Puri. It was a life in which he put "duality away," and saw that the two worlds,—this and the other,—were one. In his silence and his tears, in his songs and his service, he sought and he knew, he saw and he exclaimed :—"Krishna! Krishna!" With love in his eyes, Chaitanya lived in the One Supreme Presence. And he cried, again and again :—"I belong to the Soul of the Beloved!"

The inspiration of his life passed into many hearts. Nityananda, who had travelled all over India in quest of Sri Krishna, came in contact with Sri Chaitanya and became an inspired preacher of the Holy Name. Sri Chaitanya called Nityananda "my elder brother." Many called Nityananda the "other self of Sri Chaitanya." Often, while walking in the streets, Nityananda was heard to utter, again and again, the one holy name of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with tears in his eyes.

Hari Das, known as Thakur Hari Das, suffered much at the hands of unbelievers but accepted all pain and suffering as a "gift of Sri Krishna," and joyfully joined the Banner of Sri Chaitanya. Hari Das brought not a few under the divine influence of *Nama*, the Holy Name. One of them was a beautiful woman who was bribed by a rich landlord and sent to Hari Das to lure him away from the path of purity. For three nights she did all she could to draw Hari Das to the pitfall of sin. She failed. Then, with tears in her eyes, she fell down at the feet of Hari Das and said to him :—"Have mercy on me,—a sinner!" To this repentant sinner, Hari Das said :—"If you will live a truly spiritual life, distribute your wealth among the poor and serve the *tulsi* plant and sing the Holy Name." This woman became new : she blazed with the fire of true spiritual life. Many orthodox people called Hari Das a *sudra* : he was

bred in a Muslim family. But Sri Chaitanya called Hari Das a "jewel of Mother Earth" : for Hari Das was a *bhakta*, a devotee of Sri Krishna. And a devotee, Sri Chaitanya taught, was superior to men of other castes, if he was a lover of Krishna.

Yet another disciple of the Master was Swarupa, the "alter ego" of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Swarupa was, perhaps, a greater scholar in the Vedanta than Nityananda. Both loved Krishna and sang His Name with tears in their eyes. Swarupa was rich in the gift of music and song, and he was deeply loved by Sri Chaitanya and Nityananda. To Chaitanya, Swarupa sang the divine love-songs of Vidyapati, Chandidas and Jayadev's *Gita Govinda*. *Bhaktas* were they all of Krishna and Radha.

In 1533, soon after Hari Das passed away, the Master, Sri Chaitanya, disappeared. And every eye was touched with tears : but no tongue could speak. The Vaishnava Community was plunged in sorrow. The *bhaktas* shed tears and lived in the vision of Chaitanya.

Many of us talk, today, of "freedom." How many there be whose minds and hearts are not yet free? Many speak of "space ships" and "travel to the moon." At some time in the coming days, I well may believe, contacts will be made between those who inhabit the earth and those who dwell in other worlds. But the supreme discovery of every age is one, only one. It is the manifestation of God not in the vastness of the universe, but in the lowly heart in the Holy Spirit of Love. The supreme discovery is the discovery of the Divine Spirit in dedicated lives.

"The Divine Spirit," Chaitanya taught, "is Everlasting

Love." And Eternal Love emptied Himself and was revealed in Krishna and Christ,—and indeed, in every redeemer of man in every clime and every race.

Sri Chaitanya spoke to his age the word of Krishna :—
 "Come unto Me, O ye that are weary, forlorn and lonely!
 and find your rest in the One Eternal Love!" I, verily,
 believe that in Sri Chaitanya's words and in his deeds and
 his silence spake the voice of the Man Universal,—the
 Krishna and the Christ of Ages. Therefore has Sri Chaita-
 nya gained ascendancy over the hearts of millions, century
 after century. Therefore to sons and daughters of East
 and West, his message speaketh still :—

Children of the Mother!
Rise ye above all castes and creeds,
And share ye with all
The radiant Life of Love Divine!

KNIGHTS OF THE SPIRIT*

MANY years ago, I spoke of Guru Gobind Singh as a "Liberator" of India. The Sikhs call him their "Deliverer."

Under his leadership, Anandpur, which was founded by Guru Tegh Bahadur, truly became a city of *anaada*, divine bliss, immortal joy. At Anandpur, around the great Guru assembled poets and painters, artists and scholars, singers and students of Sanskrit and Hindi lore.

At Anandpur, Guru Gobind Singh revolves in his mind the thought of how the "disciple" may become a channel of the spirit and message of Guru Nanak. Guru Gobind Singh is the tenth Guru. And he, the tenth Guru, must soon depart. And after the tenth, what was to become of the Sikhs? How were they to transmit to India's millions the great message and life-force of the Great Master? They lived in difficult days. How were they to meet the challenge of Aurangzeb and his enemies? The Sikhs must become new. To them the pomp and power of earthly kings must become ashes and dust. They must go forward to die for the oppressed, the lowly and the lost.

Guru Gobind Singh sends out a word to his disciples to gather together on the Vaisakhi Day at Anandpur. And when they have gathered together from many parts, he rises,—a naked sword in his hand! Many of them are frightened! Guru Gobind Singh then says:—"How many of you are ready to die beneath the stroke of this sword? To die that others may live! How many?"

Alas! softness has entered the life of the Sikh community. "How many?" An answer to this throbs in centuries of India's agitated history.

* April 13 is sacred as the Vaisakhi Day.

"How many?" The Great Guru asks again :—"Which of you are ready to perish by my sword that others may live?"

Only one brave Sikh stands up, then comes forward and, in deep reverence, says :—"Master! this head be thine for ever! To perish by thy steel is a joy for ever!"

On a little mound is pitched a tent : into it enters the Guru and he is followed by the blessed disciple.

Soon the Master comes out of the tent with his sword stained in blood and says :—"Is another ready? One more disciple ready to die that others may live?"

And five times does the Guru call and five Sikhs step forward,—ready to die that others may live! And the Guru takes them, one by one, to the tent and every time comes out with his sword streaked in blood!

The five were ready to die : not one is dead! Not one has been slain by the Guru's sword! The five have changed their clothes in the tent. The five are decked in saffron turbans and in saffron-dyed garments. The five have worn the same dress as the Guru. The five, the *Pancha Piyaras*, the Beloved Five, now come out of the tent with the Beloved Guru. The five are radiant as the Guru! The five look as the five faces of the one Guru!

And now is ready the nectar (*amrita*),—the sanctified water in which the Guru has poured the *mantram* of *shakti*,—the song of the sword.

The Guru's mother, then, pours her sugar-crystals into the water,—the *amritam*,—and sweetens the nectar. In the Sikh is blended heroism with the gentleness, the sweetness of the mother-heart. The Sikh knight is a soldier and a *bhakta*,—the two in one!

The nectar is held in a steel vessel. The Guru stands erect : the knight kneels on his left knee and looks up to the Guru, drinking in the light that flows out from the

Master's face. The Master gazes into the eyes of the knight, then pours on his face the nectar, and asks him to sing the *mantram* :—

*Wah Guru ji kā Khalsa :
Sri Wah Guru ji ki fateh!*

To the Blessed Master belong the Chosen Ones,
the Khalsa!

Glory! Glory! to His Name!

Every hair of the disciple's head is then filled with the nectar. Blessed be the Khalsa who, with every hair of his head, sings the Song of the Guru,—the Song of the Sacred Steel!

Guru Gobind Singh, then, asks the Beloved Five to drink the nectar from the same steel cup!

Then, looking deep into their faces, the Guru says :—

*Ye are the sons of Nanak!
Ye are the Akala Purukha's own!
Verily, ye are the Chosen Ones!
I name you the Khalsa!*

*Ye shall own no property :
Ye shall hold all
As a trust for the Master's work!
And ye shall love man as man :
For ye shall be servants of Humanity!*

*And ye shall know no caste, no creed :
And ye shall keep alive this Flame of New Life,
And the Flame shall not flicker!*

*And ye shall worship, in deep meditation,
The One Imperishable Spirit!
And ever purified shall you be in the dhyanam of your Master.*

*And forget not this
That ye shall not pray, each for himself,
But all for all,—
All for the whole Khalsa!
And in each one of you shall live the whole Brotherhood.*

Then does the Guru ask the Beloved Five to prepare again the nectar and to anoint others with it.

And the Beloved Five sit in a group and prepare the nectar. And the Guru is the first to offer himself to be anointed with the nectar and, from the hands of the Beloved Five, the Guru drinks the *amritam*. And the Guru's name is changed from Gobind Rai to Gobind Singh. The Guru is become a *chela* : the Master shines radiant as a disciple.

And the joyous chorus exclaims :—"Sat Sri Akal!" "The Deathless is the True!" "The Timeless One is the Only Reality!"

And thousands of Sikhs are anointed. There is the birth of the Khalsa,—the new order of knights, the new order of *bhakta*-soldiers, saluting God with the sword and reciting the *mantram* of *Wah Guru*.

The vows the Khalsa vowed were the seed of a new society, a new order of sons and daughters who went forth singing to serve and suffer, singing,—to die! Again and again, have I meditated on the Khalsa vows and aspirations. I wished these were inscribed on tablets and passed on from school to school, from college to college, from group to group of students and youngmen, eager to serve India in these difficult days! The Khalsa vows and aspirations, I sum up in the following words :—

*I am thine, O Guru!
And death to me is naught!*

*For all to me is He,—
The Eternal One!*

*I seek not the kingdom of power :
And I have turned my face away
From the glitter of gold.*

*I lust not for the beauty of woman.
Nothing, nothing on earth do I own :
Nothing do I claim for myself :
For all belongeth to the Lord!*

*I give, I serve, I suffer in joy :
I rejoice as I take this body of flesh
To the sacrificial altar,
For the sake of my Guru,
My Community and my Country.*

*In joy I go forward :
In joy I die for others :
In joy I expire,
Singing the Nama, the Name of the Lord!
In joy I suffer for others :
And I long to see them saved from misery,
In this world of sordid money-making.*

The creation of the Khalsa I regard as the crowning achievement of the great Gurus. In them was incarnated, again, the Eternal in our history. And today? A new age is knocking at your door today, ye sons and daughters of Nanak and Gobind! Awake! And offer the New Age the worship of sacrifice and of the Faith your fathers kept! Awake! And let the God in you grow!

SRI RAMA AND NEW INDIA*

No nation may hope to achieve greatness without the inspiration which comes of honouring its heroes. And has history a richer record of heroism than the story of Sri Rama?

It is a story not much remembered by the English-educated, but it lives in the hearts of India's millions and is sung every night in many an Indian village. It is not right to say the Indian masses are ignorant. They have in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* a rich inheritance of culture. The regrettable thing is that the "educated" classes are becoming strangers to them.

For centuries was the life of India's people influenced by the *Ramayana* and other national epics. The minstrel sang them, the schoolmaster and the preacher recited them and expounded their great message of *shakti*. They were the apostles of education in the olden days. In any revival of ancient Indian Culture, the story of this Epic Hero of Hindusthan must have an important place.

Is not the *Ramayana*, I am asked by the "educated," a tradition? And must we not reject traditions? But, surely, there are traditions and traditions. Whatever in the ancient documents be dead or devitalising we must reject wholeheartedly. But there are treasures enshrined in tradition. Life, indeed, is more than tradition : for life is creative. Therefore let not tradition play the tyrant. But to reject the treasures of thought and experience enshrined in tradition is to impoverish ourselves and reject

* 19th April is sacred as the Ramanaumi Day.

life itself. For creative life has a continuity and is not cataclysmic.

Does not the *Ramayana*, I am asked, refer to an age in history when man was uncivilised? And, therefore, does not this Epic reflect a lower culture than our own? Is noise, I ask, a test of progress? Civilisation, as I understand it, is humanisation : and there is no humanisation without self-control or *tapas*. In Sri Rama's age there were *asuras*, *rakshasas*. But they recognised the superiority of *tapas*. A great message has this Ancient Book for the modern man, who, victim to a machine-civilisation and worn out in vulgar pleasure-hunting, is becoming more and more forgetful of the Unseen Law which the Books name the *Dharma* or *Dhamma*.

The call of the Law came to Sri Rama. How nobly he answered it! But a day before, preparations were on foot to crown him king. Suddenly, they were cancelled : the wheel had turned. Sri Rama was called upon to go into exile for fourteen years. With what spiritual calm and dignity he stepped out of the palace into the *tapobana*, the forest of his exile! Sri Rama accepted the call of the Law, the call of Destiny, in a heroic spirit. Sri Rama kissed the Cross. He realised that life became rich and radiant through *tapasya*. The *Ramayana* sounds a deep note of heroic optimism. Suffering exists, but cannot touch the soul. Evil exists, but can be conquered by *tapasya*. For life, in its depths, is divine, and man is of the Spirit.

The word "*Ramayana*" means "The Wanderings of Rama." More thrilling is this Ancient Story of Rama than that other one of the wanderings of Ulysses. Rama wanders in the Deccan, then settles down in an *ashrama* on the

Godavari banks. He wears as clothes the barks of trees : he eats the roots and fruits which the wild jungle gives : he sleeps on the ground. He spends his time in communion with nature. Then his seclusion is disturbed. Sita is stolen away to Lanka by Ravana. Rama steps out of his seclusion as a hero. He recovers Sita. He vindicates the Moral Law.

The tasks and pains of Hercules make him the greatest hero of Greek history. A greater than Hercules was Sri Rama. He was not merely a warrior. He was not merely a culture-hero. He was a *dharma* hero. Rama conquered in the power of *dharma*. Rama conquered by drawing upon the Eternal Life in *atma-shakti*. Hindu society has suffered much from over-individualism. It is the sin of egoism. Its corrective is the *dharma*-ideal so vitally revealed in the life of Sri Rama.

There is a beautiful little story of Rama. He is at play. His father wants to see him. His mother calls him. And then the poet says :—"Rama comes up smiling, with his hands full of mud." Rama smiling, with his hands full of mud,—that to me, is a symbol of Rama, the Friend of the poor. Are your hands soiled? Full of mud? Go to the poor, the depressed, the oppressed! Go to them in humility and love and say to them :—"You are ours." Bring them back into your society weakened by pride. Serve them, and in that service gather the new strength you need. Get a new *shakti* through fellowship with the poor. Then build society. Build a new Brotherhood of the Nation. Build not alone for yourselves. Build for a new Asia, a new Civilisation, a new Humanity.

WHAT JESUS MEANS TO ME*

WHAT a figure of undimmed beauty ! He is radiant in the Buddha. He is glorified in Nanak. He shineth in Krishna.

The dearest name to Krishna was "Daridra Narayana," the "Lover of the poor." And Jesus dearly loved to be called "O poor one !" To his disciples Jesus said :—"Love the poor if you will love me truly."

One day, he struck the ground and picked up dust. And, behold ! in one of his hands appeared gold and in the other clay. Then, turning to his disciples, he asked :—"Which of the two is sweeter to your hearts ?" And they said :—"Gold !" But Jesus said :—"Both are alike to me!"

A rare spirit in history, his life was love and his crown was meekness. He claimed to be not a "leader" but a "servant." He taught that the Kingdom of God cometh by love and lowliness of mind. In this Kingdom of the Spirit are not the worshippers of wealth, not the proud of power, not the lovers of tumults and shouts, but the poor in spirit, the meek and humble, the cross-bearers who, through renunciation and suffering, attain to the New Life.

"And who," they asked him, "is the nearest to God?"

And he said :—"He whose silence is meditation, whose speech is ever about God and the Saints and whose look is a tear."

"By what sign," they asked him, "may we know that we are from you?"

And he said :—"This one only sign that ye love one another."

And, one day, they asked him :—"Who among men is

* 24th March (Good Friday) was sacred to Jesus.

truly wise?"

And he said :—"Not he who *talks* wisely but he who *acts* wisely."

A disciple asked him :—"I seek an advice at your feet."

And he said :—"Always consider where your bread comes from."

He spoke not much. He was a picture of silence. But whenever he opened his lips to speak, his one word was, "Give! Give!"

On one occasion, he said to his disciples :—"If ever you send away a beggar empty from your house, the angels will not visit your house again for seven days."

"I have nothing at night," he said on another occasion, "and I have nothing in the morning. Yet there is none on earth richer than I!"

Not without reason would the multitudes, on seeing him, collect round him and gaze at him, unable to take their eyes off his gracious figure.

He poured the love of his heart on the poor. In them he beheld the beauty of God and exclaimed :—"The whole world is full of God!" In them he beheld the deep humility of God.

When alone and in the depths of silence, I have, methinks, seen the Face of Christ in the village-folk and on the mountain-heights, on river-banks, and in the little ones. And I have communed with him in the cottages of the poor and lowly. And, sometimes, methinks, I have seen him coming down from the heights and wiping the poor men's perspiration from their brows. In little acts of kindness, in little deeds of love, in the seemingly "unspiritual" things, — the common duties of life,—I received his benedictions. And when I asked him :—"How may I bear witness to thee in daily life?" methinks, I heard him say :—"Serve the poor with tears in your eyes!"

A COMRADE OF THE AGES*

By what name may I name thee? A brother? A comrade? A friend? A pilgrim to the Shrine? A wayfarer on the Road of Life?

Thou comest here in masks of time. Whatever thy mantle or mask, thou art of the Ancient Shrine. And I have known thee long.

I greet thee as a comrade of the ages. This day, called thy birthday, I wish thee a happy birthday,—a day of joy, of happiness which springs from service and communion with the God in us and around us and above us,—communion with the poor and lonely, and communion with the stars above and the flowers and blades of grass below!

And bless me that I may be as thou art,—an humble offering in service and love to the *Yagneshwara*, the Eternal Self!

* These lines were written by Beloved Dada on the occasion of the 54th birthday [20·3·62] of Shri Gangaram Sajandas, a close associate of Beloved Dada for over a generation.

Shri Gangaram is the Editor of the well-known journal, "Mira," which has been called a "winged messenger of the Spirit." This journal has taken to thousands of waiting hearts,—in East and West,—the message of Beloved Dada. Shri Gangaram is, also, the Secretary of the Brotherhood Association.

His is a dedicated life. He is a truly humble and heroic soul. Each day, he spends some time in the midst of children. He believes that New India,—and New Humanity,—will be built not in the Assembly or the Parliament, but in the School. And to his students he says:—"You are the architects of the Future. It is yours to make or mar. And if you would build aright, build in simplicity and sympathy, in purity and prayer, in service and sacrifice."

TEMPLE TALKS*

Believe And Achieve !

BELIEVE in your creative *shakti*! You live not in a dead world but a world of movement. Evolution is development of values. A new world is in the making. Not finished is history. Your creative *shakti* is needed.

The City of God

AN ancient story tells of a city sunk in the sea : in the depths the bells are ringing, the song is singing. In silence alone may be heard the bells and the song.

The sea is the heart : in its depths is the City of God! If you will hear the song that is singing, go into silence. Pause and reflect! Silence will sing to you!

Re-birth of Religion

BITTER memories have marred the music of the many religions of the world. A re-birth of religion is needed. Creeds are broken : dogmas are dying! A new faith is needed. It will be a new vision of the Wonder of the Ages. The new vision will dawn upon the childlike, the simple!

The Lightning

How the lightning strikes! Men and beasts and leaves of trees receive the shock.

Like the lightning is God's grace : Sri Chaitanya received the shock, and was a changed man! He saw Krishna in the blue waters of the sea, and in the Jamuna,—Krishna in all!

Hide and Seek

WONDERFUL is the hide-and-seek game of God. As a Light

* From Beloved Dadaji's talks at the "Satsang" and the "Sanctuary."

He shines before us on the path of life, and again He hides Himself. The Light retreats! And the light reveals! It hides. It shows. Wonderful is the hide-and-seek game of God.

Preach the Word

"BELOVED, preach the Word!" said St. Paul to Timothy. The Word, the *Nama* (Name), is nothing outer. It is the Hidden Word of the soul. The *Shabda*,—how may we preach it? Not by words, but by thought and will and deed and life!

The Light

How the sun blazes, when the air is bright and clear! So will the Light of God shine upon thee, if thou wilt be bright and clean in the heart. The Light is hidden from the mighty and the wealthy : the Light is revealed to the little ones of the Spirit, to the humble and the simple.

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P. H. RAMGHANDANI

Dated, 23rd March, 1967

(Signature of the Publisher)

DAILY INSPIRATION*

April 1

Intoxication

LET my lips be sealed! Let my mouth be dumb! But give me the wine of Thy Name that drunk, intoxicate, I may adore Thee in ecstasy.

April 2

The Dust of Humility

BESMEAR thine eyes with the dust of humility; and thou wilt see and thou wilt know!

April 3

Unclouded Understanding

UNCLOUDED is the understanding of him who, master of himself, will not let his senses be swayed by things of sense.

April 4

God Is !

WE live in a period of negative thinking, and people say :—
“We are afraid. God is a myth! Religion is passing away!”

Is religion passing away? Is God a myth? Is the sun set to rise no more? Have the birds ceased to sing,—and mothers ceased to love their children? Is every spark of inspiration extinguished?

Heaven and Earth may pass away : but not one Word of Eternal Truth or Love can perish!

April 5

The Road of Allah

CLOTHED with humility, and covered with dust, walk the Road of Allah, and thou shalt behold Him before thou dost reach the end of the Road.

April 6

The Avatara

NATIONS are in agony. In one of them,—East or West,—will be born he for whom some of the choicest souls look with aching eyes : and he, gifted with grandeur and rich

* Selections from the utterances and writings of Beloved Dadaii.

in liberating power,—he will be the healing of the Nations.

April 7

The Sacred Mystery

NONE may hope by reason to know the sacred mystery of life : you have to drink in the mystery. So be intoxicated and sit in silence and sing!

April 8

Surrender

AND this day I prayed :—"O Lord! I look up to Thee! I am Thine! Lead me where Thou wilt!"

April 9

The Wine of Wisdom

THE Wine of Thy Wisdom stirs my soul to intoxication.

So bless me that naught in the world may ever attract me and that I be wholly drunk with Thy Holy Beauty!

April 10

Thou art the All !

THE world to me is less than half a grain, less than an atom, less than an atom of an atom.

The world is naught, is *maya*, is a show, a shadow-shape that comes and goes!

Thou art the All!

April 11

Beloved ! I come !

THE evening sun was setting and in the temples, on the river-bank, as the temple-bells were ringing, they were reciting sunset prayers and holy hymns.

But on me the sun was rising and my heart was throbbing with joy.

For I heard, rising from the waves, the call of my Love :—"Come! The blessed time of night is nigh. Come! And in union with Me, be one with the One!"

Beloved! I come!

April 12

The Spell of Maya

WHOSO looketh on his "ego" as the "doer" in this world

of *maya*,—he is under the spell of *maya*.

He knoweth not!

April 13

All Life is Sacred

You say you are a "person." Beneath your "*persona*," "mask," you hide the Hidden Self.

Forget not that beasts in the field and birds on wings are also "persons." They, too, hide beneath their masks the One Hidden Life.

April 14

The Light of Lights

THE Torch of all this Earth, from end to end, is He!

The Light of all the million suns and moons is He!

The Flame Inextinguishable of all the Fires which burn is He!

The millions of stars shine in the shining of His Light which spreads from East to West.

April 15

Blessed are the Wounded !

COME to me, O Lord! with the sword of the Spirit that, wounded, I may be nursed by Thee and served by Thee, O Master! who art the servant of all!

April 16

In Life and Death

LIVING, may I serve Thee in deep humility of the heart!

Dying, may I glorify Thee in anguished aspiration!

April 17

The Cave of Darkness

ALL desire is a wave of the Dead Sea : and all passion is a chain that bindeth to the Cave of Darkness!

April 18

The Infinite

Who knoweth Him in His Fullness?

The true, the good, the beautiful, the wondrous that you behold in the Universe is but a ray of His Radiance, a

spark of His Splendour!

April 19

True Greatness

WHOSO would be truly great must greatly serve!

April 20

Thy Love Abides !

UNNUMBERED are Thy Forms, O Lord!

The Forms, no matter how fair, are fleeting. Thy Love abides!

April 21

The Meaning of Life

THE hearts that ache not, know naught of the meaning of Things.

April 22

Behind the Veil

BEHIND the magic veil of *maya* is hidden He whom the world doth not see,—the Ancient One who ever abides.

April 23

Detachment

GOD, too, acts : but His acts soil not, for they are acts without attachment, unchained by desire.

So act thou, too, and *karma's* bondage break through *karma* wrought as worship!

April 24

Happy in Poverty

I KNOW what it is to dwell in poverty : but in my soul are treasures of knowledge and so have I felt happy in the midst of want.

April 25

Aspiration

LIVE Thou in my life, that I may die in Thy dwelling-place!

April 26

Pictures of God

Do you doubt that man is made in the image of God?

In some quiet moments, do you not feel that when you do a small service unto one of the least of the human beings, you are doing it unto God Himself, receiving rays of His benedictions?

April 27

Delegates of God

I stood in the presence of a saint. I gazed at his face, so trusting, so discerning, so child-like!

And I asked myself:—Whence are these great souls? And who are they?

Is each one an atom? Is not this atom more divine than many other atoms? Is not this atom charged with a radiation that travels from other worlds, other planes, charged with a light, a master-light that never was on land or sea? Is not this atom an apostle to the earth of a higher realm? Is not this atom a delegate of God?

April 28

The Homeland

SURELY, I did not, of myself, come to this Earth.

He brought me here. And I feel my Homeland is not here.

Here I roam, and there is within me the faith which says that He, who brought me here beneath the heaven's dome, will bring me, some day, to my home!

April 29

Freedom

To be free is to be creative !

April 30

The Wise Fear Not !

THE wise know that forms, fleeting frames, perish, but the *Atman* abides.

And knowing this, they fear not!

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